DAWN

METRO South

KARACHI Saturday, January 24, 2026

KARACHI

Sunset	06:11pm
Sunrise (Tomorrow)	07:16am

NEXT 24 HRS

Minimum	10°C
Maximum	22°C
Humidity	30%
Outlook	Mostly Sunny

Indian captain Yadav regains form in big win against NZ

Pg.18 SPORT

(CLOCKWISE from left): People buy thicker jackets from a stall; the business of chicken broth and boiled eggs roars; and a group of shopkeepers gathers around a bonfire on a cold winter night. —Fahim Siddiqi / White Star

Deploy cold paraphernalia, dust off woollies, bring *yakhni*, winter is here!

Roads deserted; hoodies won't do; no tea at open dhabas; geysers off; stay indoors!

By Shazia Hasan

KARACHI: The people of the city are not used to very cold weather. Therefore, the mercury drop after the recent light showers is a surprise. Many were in denial when knowledgeable friends warned them that "winter is coming" until it actually came.

Just a hoodie or sweatshirt, a sweater over normal cotton clothes or a single blanket or quilt will not do anymore. The shivering, the chattering of teeth, the cold breaths yearn for mittens, woollen socks, beanies, earmuffs, thicker blankets, quilts with extra filling, fur-lined jackets and heaters in the house. Instead what we have is a head start on freezing early in the morning when you turn on the tap to the torture of washing your hands with ice-cold water (the geysers are still off because of nightlong gas loadshedding) and it is all down a snowy hill after that.

Karachi roads wore a deserted look soon after sundown as most people preferred remaining indoors. "It's the end of winter. It won't get any colder than this. So better to wait it out indoors," said one Karachiite, speaking for millions of others who also stayed back home.

"We can't hide ourselves behind closed doors and shut windows. We have to face the Siberian winds the best we can as we can't stop working. We need to go out to earn our living," said another, speaking for the ones who needed to go out for one reason or the other. They braved the cold with jackets and shawls over sweaters, mittens, beanies and earmuffs.

Desperate times called for desperate measures when things became too much,

Continued on Page 14

Mercury remains in double digits

KARACHI: While the skies remained clear in the city on Friday, dry, chilly winds brought the temperature down from 13.5 degrees Celsius to 10.5°C.

Humidity levels dropped to 36 per cent in the morning and 21pc in the evening, respectively.

According to the Met department, cold winds will continue to blow on Saturday (today). The minimum temperature is likely to range between 8-10°C. —Staff Reporter

Govt to rebuild Gul Plaza in two years, Murad tells PA

Asks critics to focus on accountability, urges them to avoid politicising the tragedy

By Tahir Siddiqui

KARACHI: Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah on Friday told the Sindh Assembly that the provincial government would demolish and reconstruct Gul Plaza within two years, ensuring no increase in the number of shops.

Giving a policy statement on the floor, he announced a comprehensive relief package for the affected people, including Rs10 million compensation for families of the deceased, Rs500,000 for affected traders for subsistence, and interest-free loans through the Sindh Enterprise Development Fund.

"Alternative commercial spaces are being arranged, with efforts to waive rent for affected traders for up to two years," he added.

Mr Shah also provided a thinly attended house the details and the timeline of the incident, stating that the fire erupted at 10:14pm on the ground floor and the first emergency call was received at 10:26pm. "The first fire tender was dispatched at 10:27pm," he said, adding that the commissioner, deputy commissioner and police reached the site within 16 minutes of the blaze.

The chief minister dismissed claims linking the Gul Plaza tragedy to the 18th Amendment and said that raising constitutional questions over dead bodies and using this tragedy for political purposes was a crime.

He appealed to the critics to focus on accountability but avoid politicising the tragedy with hidden agendas. "The PPP has always stood with the people in times of crisis – and will continue to do so," he said.

Tracing irregularities in Gul Plaza's construction to decades earlier, the chief minister said that the original plan allowed a basement and two floors, but additional floors were later sanctioned. "The plot, leased in 1884 for 99 years, was renewed in 1991, and violations were regularised in 2003 – all before the 18th Amendment," he said.

Muhammad Farooq of Jamaat-i-Islami tried to interrupt the CM's speech, but Speaker Syed Awais Qadir Shah firmly asked him to remain seated, saying the CM was on

Continued on Page 14

Toll climbs to 71 as four more bodies retrieved from rubble

MQM-P urges PM to set up inquiry commission, relief, rehabilitation fund

By Imtiaz Ali and Imran Ayub

KARACHI: The death toll of Gul Plaza blaze rose to 71 on Friday as rescue workers found more remains from the rubble of the gutted shopping centre.

Also, the Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan formally approached the prime minister, asking him to constitute a high-powered inquiry commission and set up a relief and rehabilitation fund under the federal government.

While the search operation at the gutted building continued for the seventh day, officials cautioned that the final death toll can only be determined after completion of their search operation and identification of all the bodies.

Police Surgeon Dr Summaiya Syed issued an updated list of 71 deceased. Of the 16 identified so far, nine were identified through DNA tests, which have been performed for 49 samples.

Muttahida's letter to PM

The MQM-P said in a statement on Friday evening that its chairman Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui wrote a letter to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and requested him to constitute a high-level inquiry commission under the Pakistan Commission of Inquiry Act to investigate the tragic fire incident at Gul Plaza.

Dr Siddiqui, who is also the federal education minister, expressed deep concern over the slow pace of search and rescue operations, stating that even after seven days since the incident, several people remain missing, while many families have yet to receive the bodies of their loved ones. He said the magnitude of the tragedy has left thousands of families in distress and grief.

He said more than 12,000 families have been directly affected by the Gul Plaza fire.

Dr Siddiqui said the Sindh government, Karachi mayor, Sindh Building Control Authority (SBCA), Karachi Development Authority (KDA) and other provincial and municipal institutions were responsible for the tragedy as they failed to enforce safety regulations.

He demanded that the federal government establish an independent, transparent and impartial commission to be named the Gul Plaza Tragedy Inquiry Commission to uncover the facts, determine responsibility and ensure accountability.

He proposed that representatives of law enforcement and intelligence agencies, State Bank of Pakistan, Nespak and other relevant organisations should be made part of the commission.

The MQM-P chairman demanded the creation of a federally administered "Relief and Rehabilitation Fund" to provide financial assistance to the victims and bereaved families.

Cash, 1.5-kg gold found

Rescue-1122 Chief Operating Officer Dr Abid Jalal Shaikh told *Dawn* that the search and rescue efforts were still ongoing.

A spokesperson for Rescue-1122 said that their urban search and rescue team found cash and valuables from the rubble.

According to reports, the rescuers found 1.5 kilogram of gold from the debris of a jewellery shop in the plaza.

The yellow metal, cash and other valuables were handed over to their owners.

Meanwhile, Rescue 1122 chief retired Brigadier Wajid Sibghatullah Mahar said rescue personnel were to continue their recovery efforts in "10 to 15 per cent" of the building's area that they had been unable to access before.

"There are some concerns that we have not been able to reach the ground floor, where the fire erupted. We hope to find bodies from there," he told the media.

Four feared drowned after boat-vessel collision

By Our Staff Reporter

KARACHI: Four people were feared drowned when a merchant vessel collided with a fishing boat off Manora in the small hours of Friday morning, said police and rescue service officials.

Seven fishermen were rescued while four others could not be recovered till late in the evening.

South DIG Syed Asad Raza said the incident took place at the channel of Karachi Port. He said on at about 2am a fishing boat, named Al-Shahbaz, met with an incident in the channel. It was hit by MV Kang Huan and capsized.

He said seven people jumped into the water were rescued by another fishing boat. However, four people were still missing, he added.

The rescued fishermen were taken to hospital by an Edhi ambulance from Keamari Jetty.

The rescue operations continued till sundown. Later, an Edhi Foundation spokesperson in a statement said that their divers would resume the search on Saturday morning.

10 permanent judges of SHC sworn in

By Ishaq Tanoli

KARACHI: Ten additional judges of the Sindh High Court took the oath of office as permanent judges on Friday.

SHC Chief Justice Zafar Ahmed Rajput administered the oath to Justice Miran Muhammad Shah, Justice Tasneem Sultana, Justice Riazat Ali Sahar, Justice Muhammad Hasan Akber, Justice Abdul Hamid Bhurgri, Justice Jan Ali Junejo, Justice Nisar Ahmed Bhanbhro, Justice Ali Haider 'Ada', Justice Muhammad Osman Ali Hadi and Justice Muhammad Jaffer Raza.

The other judges of the SHC, federal and provincial law officers, representatives of bar associations and senior lawyers attended the oath-taking ceremony held on the premises of the high court

The Judicial Commission of Pakistan (JCP) had recommended the names of the 10 judges for confirmation. Later, the Ministry of Law and Justice issued a notification and the president appointed them as permanent judges of the SHC.

In January 2025, Justice Khalid Hussain Shahani and Justice Syed Fiaz ul Hassan Shah were also appointed as additional judges of the SHC for a period of one year. The JCP, however, extended their tenures for six months.

At present, the total number of judges working in the SHC is 33 against the sanctioned strength of 40.

THIS JANUARY, SIRF YEAR MAT BADLO... LIFE BADLO!
2026
AEO STUDY ABROAD EXPO
IS BACK TO GIVE YOU REAL DIRECTION, NOT JUST PLANS.
LOCATION | DATE | TIMING | VENUE
LAHORE | 26 JAN 2026 | 11:00AM TO 6:00PM | PEARL CONTINENTAL HOTEL
ISLAMABAD | 29 JAN 2026 | 11:00AM TO 6:00PM | MARRIOTT HOTEL
KARACHI | 31 JAN 2026 | 11:00AM TO 6:00PM | MARRIOTT HOTEL
GUJRANWALA | 28 JAN 2026 | 11:00AM TO 5:00PM | AEO OFFICE
FAISALABAD | 29 JAN 2026 | 11:00AM TO 5:00PM | AEO OFFICE
MULTAN | 31 JAN 2026 | 11:00AM TO 5:00PM | AEO OFFICE
ABBOTTABAD | 31 JAN 2026 | 11:00AM TO 5:00PM | HOTEL ONE
PESHAWAR | 1 FEB 2026 | 11:00AM TO 5:00PM | SERENA HOTEL
HYDERABAD | 1 FEB 2026 | 11:00AM TO 5:00PM | INDUS HOTEL
FREE ENTRY
20+ TOP RANKED UNIVERSITIES
SCHOLARSHIPS UP TO 50%
SCAN TO REGISTER
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